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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000329

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STATE FOR AC/RSS, EAP/RSP AND EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2015

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [AS](#) [ARF](#)

SUBJECT: NO GOA POSITION YET ON ARF CBM SEMINAR ON MISSILE  
DEFENSE

REF: A. STATE 24613

[1](#)B. CANBERRA 155

Classified By: POLCOUNS WOO LEE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B AND D).

[1](#)1. (C) PolMilOff delivered ref A points and concept paper on February 14 to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Section Chief Paula Watt, ARF Action Officer Fiona Couchaud, and Defence Policy and Liaison Section Chief Jane Lambert, and separately to ADOD Assistant Secretary for Strategic Policy Marc Ablong on February 15.

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As of February 18, there was no unified GOA interagency position on the seminar (although neither DFAT nor ADOD opposed it in principle), particularly on the issue of whether Australia would choose to make a presentation. Watt, who replaced Robyn Mudie as ARF Section Chief in mid-January and will attend the Berlin Inter-Sessional Support Group (ISG) meeting next week, said she looked forward to hearing more details from the U.S. delegation. She and Lambert wondered how the USG would reconcile its approach at the seminar between the two different ARF groups: the ASEAN "sponge" countries who had no involvement in missile defense and would likely absorb the information without much reaction, and the North East Asian states such as China, Japan, and the two Koreas, which had far greater and differing stakes in the issue. Noting that it only took one ARF member to oppose such a CBM seminar, they also wondered whether the U.S. was prepared as a fallback to provide a voluntary presentation on MD at a future ISG as a way to get MD into the ARF record in a less direct manner (Ref B). They also mentioned the need for the USG to take into consideration the potential consequences of the seminar on the interests of U.S. allies such as Japan, Thailand and Australia.

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